

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CALCUT 01039 200240Z
ACTION NEA-11

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ETRD BTIO EMIN IN
SUBJECT: MAJOR U.S. TRADE OPPORTUNITIES: INDIA: BOKARO STEEL
PLANT EXPANSION: ANNEALING FURNACES.

1. MR. C.L. SENGUPTA AND MR. D. GHOSE CALLED AT CONGEN TODAY TO INFORM US THAT THEIR COMPANY, WELLMAN INCANDESCENT INDIA LTD., IS MAKING A JOINT (APPROX 50-50) BID WITH LEE WILSON COMPANY OF THE US TO SUPPLY ABOUT \$15 MILLION WORTH OF ANNEALING FURNACES TO THE STEEL ROLLING MILL WHICH IS PART OF THE EXPANSION OF THE BOKARO STEEL PLANT. THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSING BIDDER IS THE LUDWIG COMPANY OF GERMANY, IN COLLABORATION WITH WESTERWORK ENGINEERING OF BOMBAY, BUT ACCORDING TO OUR VISITORS IT IS RECOGNIZED ON ALL SIDES THAT THE LEE WILSON COMPANY HAS A TECHNICAL ADVANTAGE AND THEY BELIEVE MECON, THE INDIAN CONSULTING AGENCY (UNDER GOI MINISTRY OF STEEL) WHICH WILL EVALUATE THE FOREIGN BIDS PREFERS TO ACQUIRE AMERICAN EQUIPMENT. MECON'S PROCESSING OF FOREIGN BIDS IS LIKELY TO BE COMPLETED BY JULY 1978.

2. DETAILED TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED RECENTLY BY A MR. ROBERT HILL, VICE PRESIDENT OF LEE WILSON OF OHIO WENT VERY WELL AND STRENGTHENED
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MECON'S BELIEF IN LEE WILSON'S TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP IN THIS FIELD, ACCORDING TO MR. SENGUPTA.

3. OUR VISITORS EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN AT THE POSSIBILITY THAT FACTORS BEYOND THE STRICTLY ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL MIGHT INFLUENCE THE FINAL CHOICE OF SUPPLIER. THEY HOPED THAT IF NECESSARY THE USG WOULD

BE ABLE TO OFFER GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT FOR AN AMERICAN
BIDDER, SHOULD THIS BECOME NECESSARY, AT THE TOP
DECISION-MAKING LEVEL OF GOI MINISTRY OF STEEL.
MR. SENGUPTA EMPHASIZED THE SUBSTANTIAL OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INDIAN STEEL INDUSTRY WHICH
WERE OPENING UP, PARTICULARLY AT BOKARO, BECAUSE OF THE
INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO REMOVE THAT OPERATION
FROM EXCLUSIVE TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH THE SOVIET
UNION.

4. UPON RECEIVING FUTHER BACKGROUND NOTE FROM WELLMAN
INCANDESCENT, WE EXPECT TO PROVIDE FUTHER DETAILS
BY A LATER CABLE.
LYDON

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